



News Release

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World AIDS Day Underscores Need for ALL Utahns to Get Tested for HIV

Utah to kickoff testing programs to help meet CDC's new HIV testing guidelines

(Salt Lake City) — On December 1, 2006, Utahns will commemorate World AIDS Day and the individuals who have died as a result of the disease. This will serve as a reminder of the importance of HIV testing in preventing future infections. It is estimated that most HIV is transmitted by the 25 percent of infected people who don't realize they are infected.

According to the Utah Department of Health, HIV Prevention Program (UDOH), nearly 2,000 Utahns are estimated to have HIV, but not know it. Because symptoms can take years to present, these individuals will often infect multiple sex or drug use partners before they are aware they have the virus.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently issued new HIV testing guidelines recommending that everyone in the U.S. between the ages of 13 and 64 get tested at their next doctor visit or within the next year.

To help make it easier for ALL Utahns to get tested, UDOH will offer free HIV testing through numerous health departments and non-profit organizations throughout Utah. To kickoff this massive testing program, free rapid HIV testing will be offered in the week leading up to World AIDS Day (November 27 – December 1). After December 1, the confidential tests will be offered at little to no cost at most locations.

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“Our goal is to make getting an HIV test as fast, simple and low-cost as possible so that more Utahns will begin treating HIV testing as a regular part of their yearly health care,” said Lynn M. Meinor of the UDOH, HIV Prevention Program. “If we can increase HIV testing by even 25 percent, we will significantly reduce the number of new infections, and help many Utahns with HIV improve their quality of life by getting treatment in the early stages of the disease.”

A complete list of free testing locations and World AIDS Day events is available online at www.aidsinfoutah.org or by calling (801) 538-6096.

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The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.